

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 12163 161405Z

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

AID-20 CCO-00 FBO-01 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NIC-01

NSC-10 SPC-03 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-04 USSS-00 RSC-01

PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-20 SY-10 SCS-03 AF-10

EUR-25 INRE-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /172 W

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R 161320Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4759

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12163

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PMIL PINS XF LE US

SUBJECT: POPULAR REACTION TO USG RESUPPLY OF ISRAEL

1. WE HAVE GROWING EVIDENCE FROM OUR OWN AND RELIABLE
GOL SOURCES THAT ORGANIZED ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN BEING
MOUNTED HERE, ALTHOUGH ITS EXACT PARAMETERS NOT YET
CLEAR. MOST DANGEROUS THREAT AT PRESENT IS THAT OF
POSSIBLE DELIBERATE KIDNAPPING OR ASSASSINATION
(REPORTED SEPARATELY) BY FEDAYEEN. MOB ACTION ALSO
A POSSIBILITY ALTHOUGH PROBABILITY HARD TO MEASURE
AS OF MORNING OCT 16.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 12163 161405Z

2. IN AFTERMATH ANNOUNCEMENT US RESUPPLY FOR ISRAEL,
PRESS HAS GIVEN THIS SUBJECT AND RELATED REMARKS BY

PRESIDENT NIXON FULL ATTENTION ON FRONT-PAGES AND IN EDITORIALS. THIS REACTION REPORTED SEPARATELY BUT IT REINFORCES PRESS TENDENCIES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED TO WHIP UP ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT. POPULAR ANTI-AMERICAN OPINION ALSO BEING WHIPPED UP BY OTHER MEANS.

3. DURING EVENING OCT 15 AND MORNING OCT 16 LOUDSPEAKER T TRUCKS CIRCULATED THROUGH MOSLEM QUARTERS OF BEIRUT BROADCASTING ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA, ACCUSING USG OF PROVIDING MILITARY SUPPORT TO ISRAEL, AND CALLING FOR STRIKES AT AMERICAN INTERESTS (NOT SPELLED OUT). THIS AGITATION CAME IN WAKE OF RADIO REPORTS OF ANNOUNCEMENT USG ARMS RESUPPLY AND RELATED REMARKS BY PRESIDENT NIXON. WE HAVE HAD REPORT FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT BOTH PRESS AND POPULAR AGITATION BEING EGGED ON BY SOV AND EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS, AND THAT SORT OF ORGANIZED POPULAR ANTI-AMERICAN EFFORT WHICH SO FREQUENT HERE DURING NASSER'S TIME IS AGAIN TAKING SHAPE.

4. MAJOR QUESTION MARK IN PRESS AND POPULAR OPINION IS WHETHER OR NOT THERE WILL BE (OR IS) DIRECT USG MILITARY INVOLVEMENT OF SOME SORT, RANGING FROM USE OF VOLUNTEERS TO ACTUAL TROOPS TO POSSIBLE LANDING SUCH AS LEBANON IN 1958. SHOULD IT BECOME WIDELY BELIEVED THAT USG IS OR WILL PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY, REACTION WOULD BE ALL MORE NEGATIVE AND DANGEROUS.

5. AS YET THERE HAVE BEEN NO RPT NO SPECIFIC APPEALS FOR ANTI-AMERICAN ACTION AND THERE HAS BEEN NO SPONTANEOUS MOB ACTION. HOWEVER, COMBINATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS, PUBLICITY GIVEN USG ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RUMORS SURROUNDING THEM, AND INEVITABLE ARAB EMOTIONALISM AS RESULT OF TEN DAYS OF FIGHTING APPEAR TO HAVE STAGE SET AND ACTORS AWAITING ONLY ORDER FROM DIRECTOR. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT POPULAR ELEMENTS AWAITING SADAT'S OCT 16 SPEECH BEFORE DECISION TAKEN ON NEXT STEPS. LIKEWISE, CALL (OR ABSENCE OF CALL) BY RADIOS CAIRO AND DAMASCUS FOR ATTACKS ON AMERICAN INTERESTS WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON SITUATION HERE.

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 12163 161405Z

6. WE WOULD NOT, OF COURSE, EXPECT CONSERVATIVE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ANTI-AMERICAN ACTIVITY ALTHOUGH EVEN IN THESE QUARTERS SENTIMENT IS NOT AS PRO-US AS IT HAS BEEN IN PAST WHEN WE HAVE HAD TO TAKE STRONG STAND AGAINST SOV INTERVENTION IN ME. POPULAR IMAGE OF ARABS RECOVERING THEIR PRIDE AND HONOR IN FACE OF OVERBEARING, OMNIPOTENT ISRAEL HAS STRUCK SYMPATHETIC CHORD EVEN AMONGST CHRISTIANS. CHRISTIANS ALSO AFRAID THAT PROLONGED FIGHTING WILL RESULT FROM US AND SOV RESUPPLY, INCREASING CHANCES THAT LEBANON WILL BE

SOMEHOW DRAGGED IN OR HURT. BUFFUM

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